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The Warfare of Christianity

Part 3 – "Satan, The Ruler of This World"

"Satan, the ruler of this world." This statement invokes a big question. "How can Satan be the ruler of this world?" Doesn't the bible say that the "earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof and they that dwell in it" as found in Psalms 24:1; 50:12 (1-12) and 1st Corinthians 10:26? (Amplified version)

❖ Psalms 24:1

"A Psalm of David. THE EARTH is the Lord's, and the fullness of it, the world and they who dwell in it."

❖ Psalms 50:12 (1-12)

"If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are Mine."

❖ 1st Corinthians 10:26

"For the [whole] earth is the Lord's and everything that is in it."

But wait a minute. In John 14:30, Jesus Himself calls Satan "the prince (evil genius, ruler of the world)." Even Satan believes that he is the ruler of this world which is made evident when he tempted Yeshua the Christ in Matthew 4:8-9. (Amplified version)

John 14:30

"I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.]"

Matthew 4:8-9

"Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory (the splendor, magnificence, preeminence, and excellence) of them."

"And he said to Him, these things, all taken together, I will give You if You will prostrate Yourself before me and do homage and worship me."

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So how does one begin to reconcile within their mind who is "actually" in control? As we start to look at this question, I want to start by pointing out something in the words that are used when talking about YHWH versus what is said about Satan.

In two of the three scriptures, it is the author speaking of YHWH as the owner of all creation, and in one of them (Psalms 50:12) it is YHWH speaking of Himself as owner.

But when Jesus talks about Satan, He calls him the prince (ruler) of this world. As a prince Satan does not own anything. He only can rule, but there is someone above him that owns everything that he is ruling in. And that someone is YHWH.

Now the question that we have to ask is this. How did Satan become ruler? To answer this, we have to look at who had rule or dominion before he did.

Genesis 1:26-28 (Amplified version)

*"God said, Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and **let them have complete authority** over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the [tame] beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth.*

So, God created man in His own image, in the image and likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them.

*And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and **subdue it** [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth."*

We see from this portion of scripture that even though YHWH as the creator is owner, He gave dominion (rulership) to Adam. Let's define the word dominion.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines dominion as,

1. Sovereign or supreme authority; the power of governing and controlling.
2. Power to direct, control, use and dispose of at pleasure; right of possession and use without being accountable; as the private dominion of individuals.

Webster's 1913 Dictionary defines it as,

Sovereign or supreme authority; the power of governing and controlling; independent right of possession, use, and control; sovereignty; supremacy.

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Now let's go back to Genesis to take a look at when dominion, rulership changed hands.

In Genesis 2:16-17, Adam is given the command to not eat from the tree of good and evil, blessings and calamity, being warned that the day that he does eat from it he will "surely die." Now, when we read the account of what happened, Adam did not physically die, but his spirit did which created a disconnect from YHWH so much so that when YHWH came into the garden, He called out to Adam asking a question. "Where are you?"

We know that YHWH is all-knowing and sees everything. So, He could not have been asking that question because He did not know where Adam was. But something had changed, and now there is something that Adam had to come to grips with, and that is that he no longer appeared the same. Something changed in his image.

He was no longer in the same position of authority that he was before due to his disobedience. Death had occurred, and it was within his spirit. As it says in Romans 5:12,14

*Rom 5:12 Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man, and **death as the result of sin**, so death spread to all men, [no one being able to stop it or to escape its power] because all men sinned.*

*Rom 5:14 Yet death held sway from Adam to Moses [the Lawgiver], even over those who did not themselves transgress [a positive command] as Adam did. **Adam was a type (prefigure) of the One Who was to come** [in reverse, the former destructive, the Latter saving].*

Once Adam's spirit died, there went his authority leaving if you will, legal right for Satan to now rule in his place in the absence of God-given authority that once ruled. In Adam's disobedience he turned away from his intended purpose in being made in YHWH's image, in reflecting the "splendor" of the One who created him.

Ravi Zacharias puts it this way when talking about what it means to be made in the image of God and the loss of morality. He says this, "What does the image of God actually mean? One of the aspects of the image of God is **rational reasoning for morals**. It is **moral reasoning** at the core of who we are." He goes on to say, "we have turned from our intended purpose for which we were made to reflect the splendor of who God is... It is the image of God that gives you **intrinsic worth**." (emphasis added)

Intrinsic as defined in Webster's 1828 dictionary says,

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1. Inward; internal; hence, true; genuine; real; essential; inherent; not apparent or accidental; as the intrinsic value of gold or silver; the intrinsic merit of an action; the intrinsic worth or goodness of a person.

2. Intimate; closely familiar.

Now tie this into the ultimate purpose of what Satan tempted the woman to do, which ultimately led to Adam's decision to disobey the Lord as found in Genesis 3:5.

*"...the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and **you will be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil and blessing and calamity.**"* (amplified version. Emphasis added)

In other words, **you** will determine what the moral standards are **for yourself** and have no need for God to tell you.

❖ **Let's look at a few more passages of scripture.**

Rom 8:22 We know that the whole creation [of irrational creatures] has been moaning together in the pains of labor until now. [Jer. 12:4, 11.]

Rom 8:23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves too, who have and enjoy the first fruits of the [Holy] Spirit [a foretaste of the blissful things to come] groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies [from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal] our adoption (**our manifestation as God's sons**). (Amplified version)

What is the "whole creation" and humankind moaning together for? Our godly authoritative position as manifested sons of God, which was lost, as shown in Genesis 3:17-19.

Gen 3:17 And to Adam He said, Because you have listened and given heed to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it, the ground is under a curse because of you; in sorrow and toil shall you eat [of the fruits] of it all the days of your life.

Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

Gen 3:19 In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

Intertwined within the manifestation of the sons of God is the proper operation of Godly authority, which all points us back to being made in the image of God as found in Genesis 1:26-29.

❖ **Here are a couple of other scriptures that show Satan as the ruler of this world.**

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Ephesians 6:12

"For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the despotisms, against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere."

Despotism defined:

1. Absolute power; authority unlimited and uncontrolled by men, constitution or laws, and depending alone on the will of the prince; as the despotism of a Turkish sultan.
2. An arbitrary government, as that of Turkey and Persia.

1st John 5:19

"We know [positively] that we are of God, and the whole world [around us] is under the power of the evil one."

Even though it is very accurate and make no mistake, we are in a warfare and with an enemy who is an evil genius who is ruling in this world. And there are times if we are truly honest with ourselves. We sometimes feel overwhelmed and like there is no hope in winning. But let me encourage you with the words of our Lord as found in John 16:33.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace and confidence. In the world, you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]"

In part 4 we will look at "Is there more than one enemy, or is Satan our only foe?"